

of \$300 billion and cut Medicare \$270 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it is simply not right.

HOUSE AUDIT IS SYMBOL OF REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO OPENNESS

(Mr. CALVERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, on opening day of the new Republican Congress we voted to have an independent audit of all House financial records. This week we fulfilled our promise.

Republicans are committed to having regular future audits. We will continue to monitor our progress and instill faith in the American people.

This audit is a symbol of the new Republican Congress and our commitment to openness and reform.

The auditors found that the Democratic controlled 103d Congress had gross disregard for financial controls, business-like practices and frequently waived congressional rules.

We Republicans have already implemented a number of reforms suggested by the auditors. This audit is a road map for future management improvements and for the sake of the American taxpayer we must stay on this course.

The American people deserve this type of government. That is what they voted for on November 8, and that is what the Republican Congress will deliver.

LAWS ARE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT

(Ms. FURSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, question: What is the best way to gut a law when you do not want people to know what you are really doing?

Answer: Do what the new majority is doing, cut all the funding for enforcement, and call it fiscal responsibility.

It is obvious that they do not want to be seen for what they really are, antienvironment. So they have decided to take all the money away from enforcement. Everybody knows a law is meaningless if you cannot enforce it.

The new strategy is so simple, but it is so wrong. Here is how it works. If you and your cronies do not like the Clean Air Act regulations, just slash the enforcement funding, and you gut the act without having to vote against the act.

If you and your special interest friends do not like the environmental protection of the Clean Water Act, just zero out the enforcement budget. If you and your buddies do not like the Endangered Species Act and wildlife protection laws, cut all the enforcement money, and poachers and habitat destroyers will go scott free.

The cuts this Republican Congress is making to our environmental protec-

tion laws are extreme, unwise, and underhanded.

MEDICARE

(Mr. EVERETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, it is common knowledge that liberal Democrats have absolutely no plan to save Medicare. None. The closest they come to saving Medicare is Bill Clinton's alleged balanced budget. And even here, the Democrats would just delay Medicare bankruptcy by just 3 years—which is not really saving Medicare.

We can also see that liberal Democrats will not even recognize the report of the Medicare Trustees that says Medicare will be stone, cold bankrupt in just 7 years.

After all this, though, Democrats breathlessly defend this program and denounce any Republican effort to save Medicare. Well, my friends you can not have it both ways.

If Democrats want to continue Medicare, but reject the Republican plan, you really only have three options: First, you must increase payroll taxes by 44 percent; or, second, you must immediately decrease Medicare spending by 30 percent; or, third, you must dramatically increase premiums paid by our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, to Republicans none of these possibilities are acceptable. But they show why the Democrats have been so silent about honestly dealing with Medicare.

FOUR JAPANESE TRADING COMPANIES NOW LARGEST IN THE WORLD

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, for years the biggest company in the world—General Motors. Not any more. The new Fortune 500 list, the biggest company in the world, Mitsubishi of Japan; No. 2, Mitsui of Japan; No. 3, Itochu of Japan; No. 4, Sumitomo of Japan; and General Motors, No. 5, barely holding off Marubeni of Japan.

Unbelievable. Mitsubishi is now so big, they are bigger than AT&T, duPont, Citicorp, and Procter & Gamble combined. And, guess what, ladies and gentlemen? All these Japanese companies have one thing in common. They are all trading companies. They make their money selling to America, exporting to your town and my town. And while Japan is selling to America, Congress is fighting over food stamps.

Beam me up. There is no intelligence life left here. No wonder we have a record trade deficit. I yield back my yen.

WE ARE NOT CUTTING MEDICARE

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, according to the President and I quote.

Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up three times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it grow at two times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare cut or a Medicaid cut. So when you hear all this business about cuts, let me caution you that that is not what's going on.

While this statement is an excerpt from a speech given to the AARP in 1993, the President's words are very relevant to the current debate on Medicare.

House Republicans are not proposing Medicare cuts. In fact, under our balanced budget plan Medicare will still be one of the fastest growing programs in the Federal budget. And spending per Medicare beneficiary will increase from \$4,800 this year to \$6,700 in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, saving Medicare from bankruptcy is too important for politics as usual. Instead of scaring seniors with imaginary Medicare cuts, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle need to acknowledge the pending crisis in Medicare, roll up their sleeves, and help us preserve, protect, and strengthen this vital program.

REPUBLICAN PLAN TO CHANGE MEDICARE

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have discovered the crisis in Medicare. We did not hear much about it last year when they stonewalled health care reform. We did not hear a thing about it during the contract in the first 100 days of the Congress or during the elections.

Suddenly they have discovered it. We have got to cut \$270 billion out of Medicare. That is the bottom line, they tell us. And these cuts are to be revealed on the 22d of September, not before, and adopted on the 1st of October; 8 or 9 days for debate, discussion, hearings. The largest changes ever in Medicare, in 8 days.

Why 8 days? I think it is because what they are proposing. Beneficiaries who want to enroll in MediGap plans, they are going to penalize them. They are going to make them pay more for Medicare. They do not think you should have MediGap insurance, and the rich people do not need it, so why should average Americans?

MediGap coverages would be prohibited from covering part B expenses. They would increase premiums for Medicare recipients, impose a 20-percent coinsurance on home health services, a 20-percent coinsurance on skilled nursing, a 20-percent coinsurance on clinical laboratory.

This is what they are going to sneak through in 8 days. And now they are trying to cover their fannies.

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING MEDICARE

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, last spring when the President's Medicare Trustees Board released their report on the impending bankruptcy of the Medicare system, there was and still is stone-cold silence on the other side of the aisle. No ideas, only criticism. In fact, even their buddies in the elite liberal media noticed the startling conclusions reached by the Medicare trustees. They concluded that unless we take serious steps right now to save Medicare, it will go bankrupt in 7 years.

Republicans have not dodged this issue. We have already started to take serious action to protect and preserve Medicare, not only for today's seniors, but for future generations. We will not allow Medicare to become a bargaining chip in the same old Washington shell game.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about pitting one generation against another or one party against another. It is about generational equity. We must start now to protect Medicare. The consequences for doing nothing and just criticizing are too expensive to ignore.

MEDICARE CUTS BEING FINANCED BY TAX CUTS FOR WEALTHY

(Mr. DE LA GARZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, this morning we've gathered to talk about the Medicare Program—it's health and its future, and specifically impending cuts. In recent weeks we've heard a lot of facts and figures, and we'll hear even more in the weeks to come as we proceed with our work. As we do, however, I think what we have to keep first and foremost in mind is that we're not talking just about numbers, or charts, or abstract concepts. What we're talking about is the Nation's seniors and their health and health care. I regard this to be among the most important issues we will address in this Congress.

Medicare is a program that is approaching its 30th anniversary. It is a program that has resulted in virtually universal coverage for the elderly. When I say this, I am referring to the fact that 99.1 percent of Americans over age 65 have health insurance coverage. There was a time when that wasn't the case, and that time was not all that long ago.

As we proceed with this debate, I think we all recognize and concur on both sides that there are many areas where we should look to make im-

provements. The task before us is how do we accomplish this goal in the most effective way.

One way is to reduce fraud and abuse. Every year millions of dollars are lost to health care fraud. That is why I am so pleased to see that the Department of Health and Human Services has formed a national hotline to report health care fraud involving the Medicare and Medicaid Programs. This tough new antifraud initiative is known as Operation Restore Trust. Its toll-free number is 1-800-HHS-TIPS [1-800-447-8477]. This is certainly a very strong weapon to fight health care fraud. However, it is an effort that will not be successful unless individuals participate in this fight. I encourage all citizens to help.

Now with specific regard to cuts we have heard our majority colleagues say they want to cut \$270 billion out of Medicare. What I find difficult to fathom is that the beneficiaries of these cuts will be those who are quite affluent and who do not need this type relief. Based on the current plans we have seen to overhaul Medicare, approximately 37 million beneficiaries will have their Medicare benefits cut.

The facts are as follows:

Those who get a tax break are the wealthiest 13 percent of seniors;

Those who pay for the tax break are the poorest 22 percent of seniors;

The average interest income of those who receive the tax break exceeds the total income of those who don't;

And over 4 million seniors of modest means will see a dramatic increase in their out-of-pocket costs.

This, to me, is grossly wrong. We should not cut benefits to one group that is so in need just to give a tax break to another. That is something I cannot condone nor can I support.

What we need to do is work to correct the program. We need to see that it works better and more efficiently—that it is a more streamlined and economic program. We must ensure America's seniors that Medicare will be around for the next 30 years. That must be the goal toward which we work. It certainly is mine.

RESTORING FAITH OF AMERICAN PEOPLE IN CONGRESS

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, in this Congress promises made are promises kept. On the opening day of this Congress, we promised the American people that we would allow an outside, independent firm to audit the books of the House. This is something that had never been done before.

Now that the findings of this audit are seeing the light of day, we can see how very right we were in calling for an audit. It appears that in the previous Congress, the ledgers used to keep track of a \$700 million budget

were hand written. Let me repeat that. Hand written ledgers were used to keep track of a \$700 million budget.

Can anyone imagine a multi-million-dollar operation in the 1990's using hand-written ledgers? It is beyond baffling.

At first glance, one might say that this audit only confirms the worst suspicions about Congress. I disagree, this audit proves that elected officials can come to Washington to expose the truth. This audit proves that the Republican majority is helping to restore the faith of the American people.

REPUBLICAN MEDICARE CUTS AFFECT US ALL

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the devastating Medicare cuts proposed in the Republican budget plan. The Republican plan reduces patient choice and cuts clinical research.

These cuts certainly will mean higher out-of-pocket expenses and reduced choice of doctors for our Nation's senior citizens.

But seniors won't be the only people affected. These cuts will reduce the quality and availability of health care for all Americans by cutting payments for medical education and clinical research.

These Republican cuts will harm some of our Nation's finest teaching hospitals, such as the University of Texas Health Sciences Center and Baylor College of Medicine in my district. The Association of American Medical Colleges estimates that these cuts will reduce payments for medical education by \$2.4 billion per year. The University of Texas system estimates it will lose \$21 million in Indirect Medical Education payments, and Baylor College of Medicine estimates it would lose \$15 million in such payments. These cuts will affect not just seniors but veterans as well since Baylor provides care to the VA Hospital in Houston.

Without sufficient funding, teaching hospitals will have to reduce the number of residents trained and the training offered. Such actions would reduce care for all Americans and kill our investment in quality health care.

Teaching hospitals also provide cutting-edge care for some of our Nation's sickest patients through their trauma centers, burn centers, cancer treatment centers, and other highly specialized facilities not available anywhere else. The proposed cuts will reduce access to these life-saving facilities.

These Medicare cuts are bad for seniors and bad for everyone else as well.

REPUBLICANS PLAN TO SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1